REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 31-10-2008	2. REPORT TYPE FINAL	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*

More Than a Hand Shake: Synchronizing Public Affairs Operations with Information Operations in the 21st Century.	**5a. CONTRACT NUMBER**
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S) Brendan C. McPherson, CDR, USCG Paper Advisor: Stephanie Helm, CAPT, USN	**5d. PROJECT NUMBER**
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.

14. ABSTRACT

Unprecedented advancements in communication technology (higher quality, lower cost and greater access) have greatly changed the way people (and nations) communicate in the 21st Century. It takes little more than a laptop or cell phone today to "publish" information for public consumption. This provides both significant challenges and new opportunities for a U.S. military intent on achieving and maintaining information superiority. To be successful in such an environment, where the lines between commercial mass media and independent private-personal media are increasingly blurred, will require greater integration and synchronization of all elements of information warfare. However, joint Public Affairs (PA) doctrine hardly acknowledges the mere existence of Information Operations (IO), while joint IO doctrine simply characterizes PA as a "related capability." This shortcoming represents a significant gap in military doctrine that must be filled if U.S. commanders at the operational level of war hope to maintain information superiority in the 21st Century. This paper will examine expanding PA roles and responsibilities at the operational level of war to better synchronize PA activities with complementary IO activities.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Public Affairs, Information Operations, Propaganda

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED		21	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER *(include area code)* 401-841-3556

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

More Than a Hand Shake: Synchronizing Public Affairs Operations with Information Operations in the 21st Century.

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

31 October 2008

Abstract

Unprecedented advancements in communication technology (higher quality, lower cost and greater access) have significantly changed the way people (and nations) communicate in the 21st Century. It takes little more than a laptop or cell phone to "publish" information for public consumption. Today's global information environment provides both significant challenges and new opportunities for U.S. military commanders who are intent on achieving and maintaining information superiority. To be successful in such an environment, where the lines between commercial mass media and independent private-personal media are increasingly blurred, will require greater integration and synchronization of all elements of information warfare.

In the past, military professionals and scholars have debated the advantages and disadvantages of integrating Public Affairs (PA) with Information Operations (IO). Recent changes in joint doctrine effectively answered that question, conceding that these vital functions must be closely coordinated.   However, joint PA doctrine hardly acknowledges the mere existence of IO, while joint IO doctrine simply characterizes PA as a "related capability." This shortcoming represents a significant gap in military doctrine that must be filled if U.S. military commanders at the operational level of war hope to maintain information superiority throughout the 21st Century. Without clear and unambiguous doctrine, the relationship between IO and PA will continue to exist as a result of little more than a hand shake. This paper will examine how the role and responsibilities of PA at the operational level of war might be expanded to better synchronize PA activities with complementary IO plans and operations.

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INTRODUCTION

Lt Col Douglas Marrs, USA, was losing the information war in Afghanistan. As the CJSOTF-Afghanistan Deputy J-3, he battled his adversary, Taliban spokesman Mawauli Latifola Hakim, daily without the weapon he desperately needed most to "kill" his enemy. That weapon was the truth.

Marrs recounted his recent experience in Afghanistan in an editorial published in the Summer 2008 edition of *IO Sphere* magazine.[1] Taliban forces were increasingly employing sophisticated misinformation campaigns to demoralize and delegitimize coalition forces. After weeks of suffering from the damaging effects of erroneous, misleading press reports claiming coalition losses and deaths attributed to information provided by Hakim, a frustrated Marrs desperately sought the help of the Combined Joint Task Force Public Affairs Officer (CJTF PAO) to counter the persistent Taliban propaganda. "PAO doesn't do Information Operations (IO) or propaganda," the reluctant PAO responded.[2] Not satisfied with the status quo, Marrs implemented a PA plan of his own to discount and discredit the Taliban spokesman. Marrs started proactively issuing press releases out of the IO cell in spite of repeated objections of the PAO. The press releases disseminated timely, factual details of military operations in a concerted effort to refute the false claims being made by the Taliban spokesman. A persistent Marrs eventually exposed and discredited the Taliban spokesman for who he was, a clever and determined adversary who seized an opportunity to use the U.S. military's own doctrine against its coalition forces.[3]

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography).
[1] Marrs, "From the IO Front," *IO Sphere* (Summer 2008), 3.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

Unfortunately, what Marrs experienced in Afghanistan is neither new nor unique to the Army. All theatre/operational commanders rely on the inter-related capabilities of public affairs (PA) and information operations (IO) to effectively counter propaganda. Yet, disparities in culture, policy and doctrine often contribute to creating conditions that can marginalize unity of effort at the operational level of war. This paper will examine how the role of PA might be expanded under certain conditions to create better unity of effort with IO, principally psychological operations (PSYOP), to more effectively achieve information superiority in today's global information environment.[4]

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[4] JP 3-61, *Public Affairs*, I-2.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The first essential in military operations is no information of value shall be given to the enemy. The first essential in newspaper work and broadcasting is wide-open publicity. It is your job and mine to try to reconcile those sometimes diverse considerations.

- Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1944

Those words are as a true today as they were nearly 65 years ago, yet we find ourselves operating in a global information environment that is the most complex and technologically advanced than in any time in our history. Military commanders increasingly rely on sophisticated information and decision-making systems to plan and execute a broad range of military operations, from humanitarian assistance missions to armed conflict. Winning the hearts and minds of the people is as important as defeating the enemy on the battlefield, a hard lesson learned again most recently in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF).[5] To be successful, operational commanders must achieve information superiority.[6] An effective information strategy can break the will of the enemy, increase the morale of our fighting forces, and help build and maintain support of the American public and coalition partners. Theatre/operational commanders rely on the combined efforts of PA and IO to help them achieve and maintain the information superiority they need to defeat the enemy. Consequently, the strength and effectiveness of the PA/IO relationship is critical to the overall success of any military operation. For a clearer understanding of the PA/IO relationship, it is necessary to look at joint service doctrine governing each of these distinct, yet related, information functions.

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[5] Metz, "Massing Effects in the Information Domain: A Case Study in Aggressive Information Operations," *Military Review*, 2-11.
[6] JP 3-13, *Information Operations*, I-5.

<u>Public Affairs</u>

The public affairs function resides within the joint force command element. It uses public information to (1) support the joint force commander's strategy and (2) attack the adversary's strategy.[7] The mission of PA is: "To support the Joint Force Commander (JFC) by communicating truthful and factual unclassified information about Department of Defense (DOD) activities to U.S., allied, national, international, and internal audiences."[8] Its primary purpose is to inform target audiences so they can make informed decisions about military matters. Public affairs accomplishes its mission primarily through its work with journalists and mass media news organizations, as well as its internal/command information and community relations (COMREL) programs.[9] Only factual and truthful information that is free of censorship and propaganda may be disseminated by public affairs, according to the DOD principles of information.[10] Strict adherence to these principles is critical to meeting the PA mission and maintaining the credibility of the military.

Public affairs supports the operational commander in several important ways. First, public affairs satisfies statutory and DOD policy requirements for keeping Congress, the

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[7] JP 3-61, *Public Affairs*, I-3 – I-4.
[8] Ibid., I-3.
[9] Ibid., III-3 – III-5.
[10] Ibid., I-3. DOD Principles of Information state: "It is the responsibility of DOD to make available timely and accurate information so that the public, Congress, and the news media may assess and understand facts about national security and defense strategy. Requests for information from organizations and private citizens shall be answered quickly. In carrying out DOD policy, the following principles of information shall apply: (a) Information shall be made fully and readily available, consistent with statutory requirements, unless its release is precluded by national security constraints or valid statutory mandates or exceptions. The "Freedom of Information Act" shall be supported in both letter and spirit; (b) A free flow of general and military information shall be made available, without censorship or propaganda, to the men and women of the Armed Forces and their dependents; (c) Information shall not be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the Government from criticism or embarrassment; (d) Information shall be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect national security, or threaten the safety or privacy of the men and women of the Armed Forces; (e) The Department of Defense's (DOD's) obligation to provide the public with information on DOD major programs may require detailed public affairs planning and coordination in the DOD and with other Government Agencies. Such activity is to expedite the flow of information to the public; and (f) Propaganda has no place in DOD public affairs programs."

public and military members informed about military matters. Second, public affairs raises

awareness and builds international support for U.S interests. Third, public affairs can help

prevent inaccurate reporting or the inadvertent compromise of military plans in news

reporting. Finally, public affairs can help counter efforts by an adversary to use propaganda

against U.S. military interests.[11] Public affairs can counter propaganda by "providing a

continuous flow of credible, reliable, timely, and accurate information to military members,

their families, the media, and the public."[12] Countering propaganda, therefore, is a shared

responsibility between PA and IO.

The single most distinguishable constraint on public affairs that differentiates it from

virtually all other information activities, most notably military deception (MILDEC), is its

total reliance on the truth at all times, under any circumstances. The doctrinal relationship

between PA and IO is defined in PA doctrine in this way:

> "PA and IO activities directly support military objectives, counter adversary
> disinformation and deter adversary actions. Although both PA and IO require
> planning, message development and media analysis, the efforts differ with
> respect to audience, scope and intent, and must remain separate. PA and IO
> entities must be aware of each other's activities for maximum effect and to
> achieve success. Commanders must ensure appropriate coordination
> between PA and IO activities consistent with the DOD Principles of
> Information, policy or statutory limitation and security. Effective
> coordination and collaboration with IO is necessary for PA to maintain its
> institutional credibility. Successful PA operations require institutional
> credibility to maintain public trust and confidence. Commanders should
> structure their organizations to ensure PA and IO functions are separate.
> PAOs should work directly for the commander and all supporting PA
> activities should be organized under the PAO." [13]

Truth forms the foundation upon which the role of PA might be expanded to better

support other truth-based counter propaganda activities, specifically PSYOP. Before

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[11] Ibid., I-2.
[12] Ibid., I-3 – I-4.
[13] Ibid., III-20.

analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of expanding the role of PA in this way, it is necessary to understand the role and responsibilities of IO as well.

Information Operations

Information operations encompass a broad range of offensive and defensive actions to protect friendly information, influence the behavior of the enemy, and attack and exploit enemy information and information systems. Joint service IO doctrine defines IO as: "The integrated employment of the Core IO Capabilities of Electronic Warfare (EW), Computer Network Operations (CNO), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Military Deception (MILDEC), and Operations Security (OPSEC) in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own." [14] Military capabilities that support core IO capabilities include those activities that impact or operate in the information environment but have a primary purpose other than IO. Supporting IO Capabilities include: (1) information assurance (IA), physical security, physical attack, counterintelligence (CI), and combat camera (COMCAM).[15] Related IO Capabilities include: public affairs (PA), civil-military operations (CMO), and defense support to public diplomacy (DSPD), all of which may be limited by law or policy in what they can do to support IO because "their primary purposes and rules make them separate and distinct."[16] As a related IO capability, public affairs supports the broader goal of communicating truthful, accurate and timely information to a wide range of domestic and international audiences, including the adversary.

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[14] JP 3-13, *Information Operations,* ix.
[15] Ibid., I-6. Within the U.S. Navy, combat camera is a public affairs capability that supports IO.
[16] Ibid.

<u>Implications of IO on PA</u>

The primary purpose of PA is to *inform* its many target audiences. The primary purpose of IO goes further in that it is intended to *influence* its more discrete target audiences. The core IO capabilities of PYSOP and MILDEC have the greatest implications for PA since they operate most closely to PA within the information environment. PSYOP is defined as "planned operations to convey selected truthful information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately, the behavior of their governments, organizations, groups, and individuals."[17] MILDEC is defined as "those actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary military decision makers as to friendly military capabilities, intentions, and operations, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission."[18] Public affairs doctrine prohibits the use of PA as a "tool" for either PSYOP or MILDEC because of greater concerns surrounding the implications of using deception or selected facts to influence certain audiences. PA is prohibited by doctrine and policy from having any role in planning or executing PSYOP or MILDEC, although it must remain aware of IO plans in order to deconflict its own activities and avoid any unintentional compromise of friendly information.[19] Conversely, IO is prohibited from compromising the "primary purpose and rules" under which PA and the other related capabilities operate.[20]

Coordinating, planning and deconflicting PA and IO activities can be exceptionally challenging for military planners because of the inherent conflict that exists between PA and IO. A hasty, ill conceived information strategy that does not adequately synchronize PA with

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[17] JP 3-13, *Information Operations*, II-1.
[18] Ibid., II-2 – II-3.
[19] JP 3-61, *Public Affairs*, III-21 – III-22.
[20] JP 3-13, *Information Operations*, x.

IO can undermine operational objectives and endanger troops on the battlefield. It can also damage the military's credibility and erode international support for military operations.

Combatant/ Joint Task Force (C/JTF) Commanders use the Joint Operational Planning and Execution System (JOPES) to help coordinate and synchronize IO plans with other military functions, including public affairs.[21] Normally, an IO cell is established within the J-3, and a representative of the PAO <u>may</u> be assigned to the cell to help "coordinate **and deconflict PA activities with planned IO.**"[22] While full-time PA representation within the IO cell is encouraged and desirable, it is not always possible to due to limited resources and competing interests.

Joint PA and IO doctrines, taken together, provide a general framework for how each of these vital inter-related information functions is intended to coexist within the joint force command organization. Despite the differences in intents and purposes, there are many more similarities between PA and IO than there are differences. For example, PSYOP relies on the dissemination of truthful information to accomplish its objectives. So does PA. Both PA and IO also share a responsibility for countering propaganda. In addition, IO's foreign target audiences are simply a subset of PA target audiences. Despite these important similarities, existing PA doctrine goes to great lengths to keep PA and IO separate and distinct: "PA activities affect, and are affected by, PSYOP, and are planned and executed in coordination with PSYOP planning and operations. PA must be aware of the practice of PSYOP, but should have no role in planning or executing these operations."[23]

This doctrinal guidance is a bit problematic for commanders who want to employ all elements of information operations in a fully integrated and synchronized way to gain

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[21] Ibid., V-2 – V-3.
[22] Ibid., IV-7.
[23] JP 3-61, *Public Affairs*, III-21.

information superiority over the enemy. The guidance appears to be somewhat contradictory on its face as well, making it susceptible to selective interpretation. After all, is not "coordination" a subset of "planning?" It is hard to conceptualize how PA can effectively coordinate and plan its own activities with truthful PYSOP activities when PA is prohibited by doctrine from having any role whatsoever in planning or executing PSYOP. Legitimate concerns over the possibility that some deceptive IO activities, specifically MILDEC, may compromise PA credibility are well-founded. However, prohibiting PA from having any role whatsoever in planning and executing PSYOP is overly restrictive. Limiting the role of PA in operational planning can create conditions that have significant implications on the strength and effectiveness of the PA/IO relationship. So, why shouldn't PA have a role in planning IO operations when those activities involve the dissemination of only truthful information? To answer that question, it is useful to study how operational commanders have dealt with this dilemma in recent military operations.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

In order to mass effects in the information domain and effectively integrate IO into the battle plan, the warfighter must find a way to bridge the doctrinal wall separating IO and PA without violating the rules that govern both.

- Former CJTF-7 Commander Lt Gen Thomas F. Metz

Military commanders have been using and exploiting information as means for gaining a tactical advantage over the enemy on the battlefield since the beginning of time. Information is power. How and where that power is used can create significant challenges for military commanders, especially when contemplating the use of deception and manipulation. Reconciling the inherent conflict that exists between PA (grounded in truth) and certain IO capabilities (deception and manipulation) can leave military leaders frustrated and bewildered.

That was just the case for Colonel Marrs when he learned, to his surprise, that the CJTF PAO was either unwilling or unable to help him counter the Taliban propaganda campaign. Why would the PAO refuse to help Marrs if countering propaganda is one of the primary purposes of PA? First, the PAO may have lacked the necessary resources to adequately support the IO cell in planning and executing its counter propaganda strategy. As the CJTF commander's principal spokesperson, the PAO works separately from IO and often has limited resources or time available to adequately support planning efforts within the IO cell. It is also likely that the PAO may have believed that supporting IO was prohibited by policy or doctrine, based on his response that, "PAO doesn't do IO or propaganda."[24] More likely, it was a combination of these two factors that prevented the PAO from going on the

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[24] Marrs, "From the IO Front," *IO Sphere* (Summer 2000), 3

offensive and taking responsibility for setting the record straight in the press. Fortunately for Marrs, he was able to implement a PA plan of his own to discredit the Taliban spokesman.

Military commanders faced an even more challenging propaganda campaign during Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR (OJE) in Bosnia beginning in 1995. In this instance, however, PA and IO joined forces to achieve what neither could have accomplished on their own. An intense disinformation campaign targeting NATO implementation force (IFOR) peacekeepers was threatening to undermine peacekeeping efforts and delegitimize NATO's mission.[25] By 1997, Serb media under the control of Slobadam Milosevic filled the airwaves with messages of hate and nationalism while characterizing NATO forces as an occupying force.[26] An aggressive IFOR IO plan was put together to discredit Serb leaders and correct false information that was being broadcast and distributed through Serb-controlled media, principally television broadcasts. Military planners were prohibited, however, from using deception or manipulation. They relied completely on truth as the basis for all IO plans and operations.[27] In addition, they established a number of ad hoc operational planning groups to fully integrate and synchronize planning for a wide range of inter-related PA and IO activities.[28] PA implemented an aggressive, proactive media plan to inform international news organizations and correct false and misleading news reports perpetuated by Serb-controlled media. IO implemented an aggressive plan of its own in concert with PA to disseminate complementary themes and messages to help legitimatize NATO operations and discredit Serb leaders and biased news organizations. The result was an exceptionally well coordinated counter propaganda strategy that employed "truth saturation through

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[25] Patton , "Public Affairs and Information Operations: Integral or Incompatible?" 7.
[26] Garrison, "Information Operations and Counter-Propaganda: Making a Weapon of Public Affairs," 15-16.
[27] Patton, "Public Affairs and Information Operations: Integral or Incompatible?" 7.
[28] Ibid., 10.

simultaneous and mutually supporting PA and PSYOP" to counter enemy propaganda and achieve information superiority.[29]

The successful IFOR operation in Bosnia demonstrated that an IO plan that relies principally on factual information may be the best information strategy when the trust and confidence of the local population is critical to achieving the commander's operational objectives. That construct may be particularly well suited for a number of limited military operations today, including a broad range of security, peace, humanitarian assistance, and counterinsurgency operations. The IFOR campaign also demonstrated that operational commanders can achieve better unity of effort by consolidating all information functions and capabilities within a single planning cell. Of course, that is more easily accomplished when there is common ground between PA and IO, as there was in Bosnia.

When an adversary is better resourced or less constrained by the truth, however, MILDEC activities may still be needed to gain the tactical advantage.[30] Perhaps the most successful and infamous use of military deception was the feint orchestrated by Gen George Patton in the days leading up to the D-Day invasion of Normandy during World War II.[31] It is clear that these time-tested principles of warfare play an important role in U.S. military strategy, but its uses are limited by the unalienable rights of the American people and a free and open press within a democratic society. Therefore, commanders must carefully consider the implications of how and where they employ deception and take necessary steps to ensure that the credibility of the military is not inadvertently compromised whenever its use is contemplated. Pentagon concerns over just such a possibility prompted former Chairman of

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[29] Ibid., 13.
[30] Ibid.
[31] For a full account of the military actions orchestrated by Patton to deceive Germany into believing the main front of the Allied invasion was being massed against Pas de Calais, France, see *Bodyguard of Lies: The Extraordinary True Story Behind D-Day.*

the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Richard Myers to issue a letter to military leaders warning them against involving PA in influence and deception activities.[32]

Even where there is common ground between PA and IO based on truth, commanders must also consider the intents and purposes of their actions from a broader perspective. In another example of a PA function that was either unwilling or unable to implement an effective PA plan to counter propaganda, IO planners in Iraq employed the assistance of a civilian contractor, the Lincoln Group, to secretly pay Iraqi news organizations to publish positive stories about the war effort.[33] A DOD Inspector's General report completed in 2006 determined that no laws or regulations were violated since the stories were determined to be factual. However, there was a significant backlash in the press and within the international community, prompting former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Peter Pace, and Pentagon spokesman Lawrence Di Rita to publicly denounce the operation.[34] Countering false and misleading insurgent propaganda in the Iraqi press was a valid and critical IO objective. Once again, however, public affairs was either unwilling or unable to counter propaganda with an aggressive and proactive PA plan of its own. Consequently, IO planners resorted to unusual and unorthodox tactics to fill a void left by PA, inadvertently undermining the credibility of the military along the way.

Beyond legitimate concerns surrounding the credibility of the military, strained or ineffective PA/IO relationships can have significant implications for combat operations as well. Following the highly publicized desecration of Blackwater contractors in Fallujah, Iraq in April 2004 (an IO tactic in itself), coalition forces led by the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) initiated Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE to restore control and stability to the

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[32] Scanlon, "Truth: In Defense of Military Public Affairs Doctrine," *Military Review*, 95.
[33] Editorial, "Planted Propaganda," *Washington Post*, 23 October 2006.
[34] Ibid.

embattled insurgent stronghold.[35] Despite the resolve of coalition forces, they were forced to

unilaterally halt operations after only a few days because of a lack of support from interim

Iraqi government leaders and political pressure associated with unsubstantiated news reports

of "collateral damage and excessive force" inflicted by coalition forces.[36] According to the

Coalition Joint Task Force-7 (CJTF-7) commander at the time, Lt Gen Thomas F. Metz

(USA), "Steps to prepare the information battlefield, including engaging numerous varied

Iraqi leaders, removing enemy information centers, and rapidly disseminating information

from the battlefield to worldwide media were not woven into the plan."[37] Coalition forces

returned eight months later to initiate Operation AL-FAJR. This time, coalition forces came

armed with an information strategy that fully integrated and synchronized all elements of

information warfare, including public affairs. In one telling incident, the CJTF-7 PAO

rapidly collected and disseminated footage obtained by an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)

documenting the capture of insurgents tied to an earlier rocket attack against the U.S.

Embassy. In other instances, PA released video of enemy forces violating the rules of war,

using protected sites (hospitals and mosques) as sniper positions, to discredit enemy

propaganda and restore trust and confidence in coalition forces amongst interim Iraqi leaders.

General Metz attributed the success of Operation AL-FAJR to its ability to "effectively

bridge the firewall between IO and PA to achieve our desired end-state without violating the

rules of either discipline," among other things.[38]

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[35] Metz, "Massing Effects in the Information Domain: A Case Study in Aggressive Information Operations," *Military Review*, 2.
[36] Ibid., 3-4.
[37] Ibid., 4.
[38] Ibid., 11.

REDEFINDING THE PA/IO RELATIONSHIP

The big issue in our world is whether our doctrine and policy are up to date. We owe more thinking to the combatant commanders. What are the things that should be balanced when you look at information and communications issues?

- Former Pentagon Spokesman Lawrence Di Rita

The PA/IO relationship must continue to evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities that a 21st Century global information environment provides. Military leaders should consider expanding the role and responsibilities of PA in planning and executing complementary information operations, specifically PSYOP, whenever those operations are grounded in truth and are not likely to compromise military credibility. Public affairs should have a responsibility for supporting a broader range of information operations whenever the commander determines that it is more beneficial to employ fully factual and truthful information than deceptive or misleading information operations. Under those conditions, PA can move beyond its traditional role as a "related" IO capability and fully participate in planning and executing IO/PYSOP. Redefining PA as a "supporting" capability in DOD directives and joint service doctrine would be an important first step in redefining the PA/IO relationship. As long as PA is committed to abiding by the DOD principles of information to always tell the truth in the most clear and transparent manner possible, there is little risk in eroding the military's credibility with the people or the press.

Some critics argue, however, that keeping PA separate and distinct from IO is necessary to avoid even the slightest perception that PA might be corrupted by manipulation and deception. The following framework is offered to assist military commanders and planners determine under what conditions it would be most appropriate to fully integrate PA into IO planning and execution, especially PSYOP counter propaganda activities:

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- The information is fully factual and grounded in truth.

- The information is suitable and intended for all PA and IO target audiences.

- Information disseminated by PA complies with DOD principles of information.

- PA activities would not likely jeopardize the credibility of the military.

- The intents and purposes of PA and IO activities are closely aligned.

- Information is not intended to mislead, deceive or manipulate media in any way.

- IO is prepared to support PA with additional information, facts or materials in response to follow-on media inquiries, consistent with OPSEC considerations.

Whenever those conditions are satisfied, the role and responsibilities of PA could be expanded to facilitate the seamless integration of PA into all IO planning and execution, including PSYOP. When contrary to the bedrock PA principle to always tell the truth in a timely manner, PA should not directly support, or be supported by, IO activities that may be engaged in military deception or misinformation, specifically MILDEC.

This new PA/IO relationship will provide the necessary framework needed for military planners to adequately plan, coordinate and synchronize a broader range of information operations with public affairs activities in support of the commander's operational objectives. It will help preserve the credibility of military public affairs and enhance unity of effort across strategic, operational and tactical levels of warfare. Perhaps most importantly, PA and IO planners will not have to rely on just a hand shake any longer to seize the initiative. They will have clear, unambiguous joint doctrine policy and guidance to help them defeat the enemy and achieve information superiority in an increasingly complex information environment.

CONCLUSIONS

For years, a virtual doctrinal wall has separated public affairs from information operations at the theatre/operational level of war. Despite recent efforts to improve strategic communication policy within the Pentagon and the National Security Council, joint service doctrine does not adequately appreciate the challenges and opportunities that a 21st Century global information environment provides. Consequently, theatre/operational commanders are losing the information war to an enemy that is more agile, more flexible and more determined to exploit seams in U.S. information strategy and doctrine.

Public affairs should play a more prominent role in planning and executing IO/PSYOP activities, without having to compromise its own credibility, by synchronizing its activities with IO to disseminate complementary factual and truthful information consistent with the DOD principles of information. Conversely, IO should better support PA efforts by expanding the reach of PA themes and messages to foreign audiences not normally accessible through traditional mass media channels of communication. Consequently, additional resources should also be provided so that PA can fully participate in IO planning within the IO cell. Removing unnecessary prohibitions and redefining the PA/IO relationship in joint doctrine and policy would be an important first step in changing cultures and achieving unity of effort. A better synchronized PA/IO relationship will help preserve military credibility, achieve better unity of effort, and provide the warfighter with more tools in the arsenal to adequately confront the enemy on the information battlefield.

The common denominator in this new PA/IO relationship is *truth*. That was the case in Bosnia and Fallujah, and it should have been the case in Afghanistan for Colonel Marrs as well. Perhaps, it will be in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Redefining the relationship between PA and IO will require changes in military culture, doctrine, policy and resources. Strategic guidance, joint doctrine, training programs and operational planning processes need to be updated to reflect the mutually supportive roles PA and IO can play to enhance unity of effort and increase mission effectiveness. Specifically, the following changes should be considered:

- DOD directives for IO and PA should be updated to reflect the important role PA can and should play in supporting IO planning and operations at the operational level of war under most conditions.

- Joint PA and IO doctrines should be updated to reflect the conditions under which PA can serve as a "supporting capability" for truth-based information operations (PSYOP).

- Joint PA and IO training programs should be updated to reflect the changes made in joint service doctrine and guidance.

- Additional training and resources should be provided in order to build PA planning capability and capacity at the theatre/operational level of war.

- Additional resources should be provided so that PA can play a more prominent role in operational planning at the theatre/operational level of war. A dedicated representative other than the PAO should be assigned to the IO cell, and PA representation on cross-functional planning cells, committees and groups should be enhanced to improve PA/IO planning and coordination.

- PA should take a more active role in the planning and execution of counter-propaganda operations to complement IO/PSYOP activities and enhance unity of effort.

- PA should be more proactive in disseminating news and information that supports the theatre/operational commander's military objectives.

- National and international media representatives and organizations should be engaged to discuss the implications of these proposed changes in joint PA/IO doctrine to reinforce the military's longstanding commitment to providing factual, truthful information to the public consistent with applicable law and the DOD principles of information.

- Congressional members and staffs should be engaged to ensure changes in PA/IO doctrine are both understood and supported.

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